

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method for placing a group order, mediated by a system  
2 having one or more computers, the method comprising the steps  
3 of:  
4 publishing, by a publisher, information about a quantity  
5 of a material;  
6 subscribing, via a subscriber, to a topic comprising said  
7 information;  
8 receiving, via a subscriber, said information;  
9 aggregating, via a subscriber, said information from at  
10 least one of said publishers; and  
11 responsive to said step of aggregating, selecting based  
12 on at least one criterion a best time to place said group order.
- 1 2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said criterion  
2 comprises at least one of a time criterion, a price criterion, a  
3 quantity criterion and an urgency criterion.
- 1 3. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said order is an  
2 order for a bulk good.
- 1 4. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said information  
2 comprises information about a remaining quantity of a material.
- 1 5. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said order  
2 comprises an order in partial satisfaction of said criterion in  
3 said information of said at least one publisher.

1 6. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one of  
2 said publishers comprises an automatic monitoring system.

1 7. A computer program product tangibly stored on a computer  
2 readable medium and comprising computer program instructions to,  
3 when loaded into a computer and executed thereon, perform the  
4 steps of the method as claimed in claim 1.

1 8. A computer system for placing a group order, the computer  
2 system comprising:

3 means for publishing, by a publisher, information about a  
4 quantity of a material;

5 means for subscribing, via a subscriber, to a topic  
6 comprising said information;

7 means for receiving, via a subscriber, said information;

8 means for aggregating, via a subscriber, said information  
9 from at least one of said publishers; and

10 means for selecting based on at least one criterion, a  
11 best time to place said group order.

1 9. A computer system as claimed in claim 8, wherein said  
2 criterion comprises at least one of a time criterion, a price  
3 criterion, a quantity criterion and an urgency criterion.

1 10. A computer system as claimed in claim 8, wherein said  
2 order is an order for a bulk good.

1 11. A computer system as claimed in claim 8, wherein said  
2 information comprises information about a remaining quantity of  
3 a material.

